UNHCR Libya Flash Update #5

2 October 2023

UNHCR teams distribute hygiene kits, blankets, and other relief items to families displaced by the floods in Al Marj, eastern Libya. Photo: © UNHCR/Ziyad Alhamadi

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

- Storm Daniel and flood waters have ravaged eastern Libya and an estimated 42,000 are people newly displaced while the death toll continues to rise.
- UNHCR is working to address immediate needs and has been on the ground to provide assistance to affected people; over 51,000 people in Derna and Benghazi as well as Ajdabiya, Al Bayada, Al Hamama, Al Haniyah, Al Marj, Al Wardia, Battah, Charrubah Gandoola, Shahat and Taknis have received relief items to date.
- The protection risks are immense for people affected by the floods. In particular, there are protection concerns for unaccompanied and separated children, mental health and psycho-social needs, issues of access to replacement of housing, land and property as well as essential civil documentation, a need for equal access to assistance for all affected populations and the risk of gender-based violence. Longer-term assistance will be essential.

AFFECTED POPULATION

The death toll has surpassed 4,000 people and thousands remain missing, according to WHO information. The floods have also caused mass displacement of an estimated 42,000 people, including some 16,700 people in Derna and 4,850 people in Al Bayada (IOM DTM Flash Update 29 September 2023).

Some 50,000 refugees and asylum-seekers are registered with UNHCR in Libya, including more than 3,000 who live in eastern Libya (including cases that are both active and inactive)[1]. However, UNHCR is aware of larger numbers of

[1] These include refugees and asylum-seekers residing in Benghazi.

forcibly displaced people from Sudan and Syria who were not registered with UNHCR living in the affected areas. Among the deaths are at least 150 Sudanese and 23 Palestinians.

In addition, some 46,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) were hosted in eastern Libya before the storm and floods, the majority in Benghazi. Among the worst affected areas, some 2,800 IDPs were living in Derna and 3,100 in Ajdabiya.

UNHCR EMERGENCY RESPONSE

UNHCR has been present in Benghazi since 2014 and has established partnerships with several national and international organizations. UNHCR, alongside its partners, is scaling up its response and capacity in eastern Libya to assist refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and people newly displaced by the storm and floods. Efforts to expand UNHCR's capacity to respond to flood-affected families are underway, including renting warehouses to stock relief items essential for humanitarian assistance.

Protection

- UNHCR and partners have been on the ground conducting assessments to determine the main protection needs among people affected by the storm and floods. During the past week, UNHCR teams have completed assessments in Derna, Al Bayada, Shahat and Soussa. The teams met with affected people, and visited schools and hospitals that are serving as collective shelters for the newly displaced.

- Key protection risks identified include the protection of unaccompanied and separated children, mental health and psycho-social needs, issues of access to replacement of housing, land and property as well as essential civil documentation, ensuring equal access to assistance for all affected populations, especially for non-Libyans and minority and marginalized groups, and concerns of the increased risk of gender-based violence.

- Since the onset of the crisis, UNHCR has been reaching out to refugees and asylum-seekers in the affected areas, including those whose cases are inactive in UNHCR's case management tool. To date, some 1,100 refugees and asylum-seekers have been reached. Refugees and asylum-seekers who were reached, will be included in upcoming distribution plans, with UNHCR teams present to assess their needs more closely; those who were inactivated have subsequently been activated to ensure ongoing communication and assistance. So far, immediate needs highlighted are basic relief items comprising medications, clothing and hygiene kits as well as financial and medical support. Loss of civil documentation has also been reported as a key concern which will be prioritized to ensure freedom of movement and access to services.

- Meanwhile, UNHCR is reaching out to refugees and asylum-seekers through its Help page, X and its Facebook page with basic information on available services in the affected areas.

Shelter and core relief items

- UNHCR is distributing core relief items and hygiene kits, with over 39,000 people assisted to date in 13 affected areas, including 17,500 people in Derna (NB. Households receiving multiple forms of assistance may be counted more than once). There are plans for a second airlift in the coming week, transporting further relief items.

Health

- Two generators and rubb halls arrived to Benghazi on 23 September. The items were handed over to the Ministry of Health to support in the response for flood-affected people, supporting an estimated 2,000 individuals. Medical supplies for up to 10,000 people also arrived in Benghazi on 21 September and will be distributed to individuals in need.

COORDINATION

UNHCR is working closely with national and international partners to respond to the situation as part of a broader UN response and leads the UN coordination for Protection and Shelter/non-food items (NFI). The first inter-agency Protection and Shelter/NFI meetings were convened on 19 September and have been meeting twice per week since. As further needs arise, other working groups and sub-working groups may be established to ensure appropriate coordination among humanitarian partners.

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FLASH APPEAL

2023 Libya Flood Response

BACKGROUND

On 9-11 September, Storm Daniel – a tropical-like cyclone known as a medicane – hit eastern Libya. Severe weather conditions including strong winds, sudden heavy rainfall and widespread floods have affected several areas along the coast.

Search and rescue operations as well as humanitarian needs assessments are ongoing and the full impact and scale of the devastation is still being determined; more than 4,000 deaths and 8,500 missing are reported as entire neighbourhoods have been destroyed. Damage to roads, telecommunication networks and other communal infrastructure is complicating rescue and relief efforts.

OCHA reports that floodwaters have shifted landmines and other ordnance left over from years of conflict. The International Rescue Committee has warned of a public health crisis in flood-affected parts of Libya, particularly in Derna, as water sources have been severely contaminated by sewage, leaving thousands without access to clean and safe drinking water.

UNHCR staff members survey the destruction in Derna, Libya. Photo: © UNHCR/Ahmed Al Houdiri.

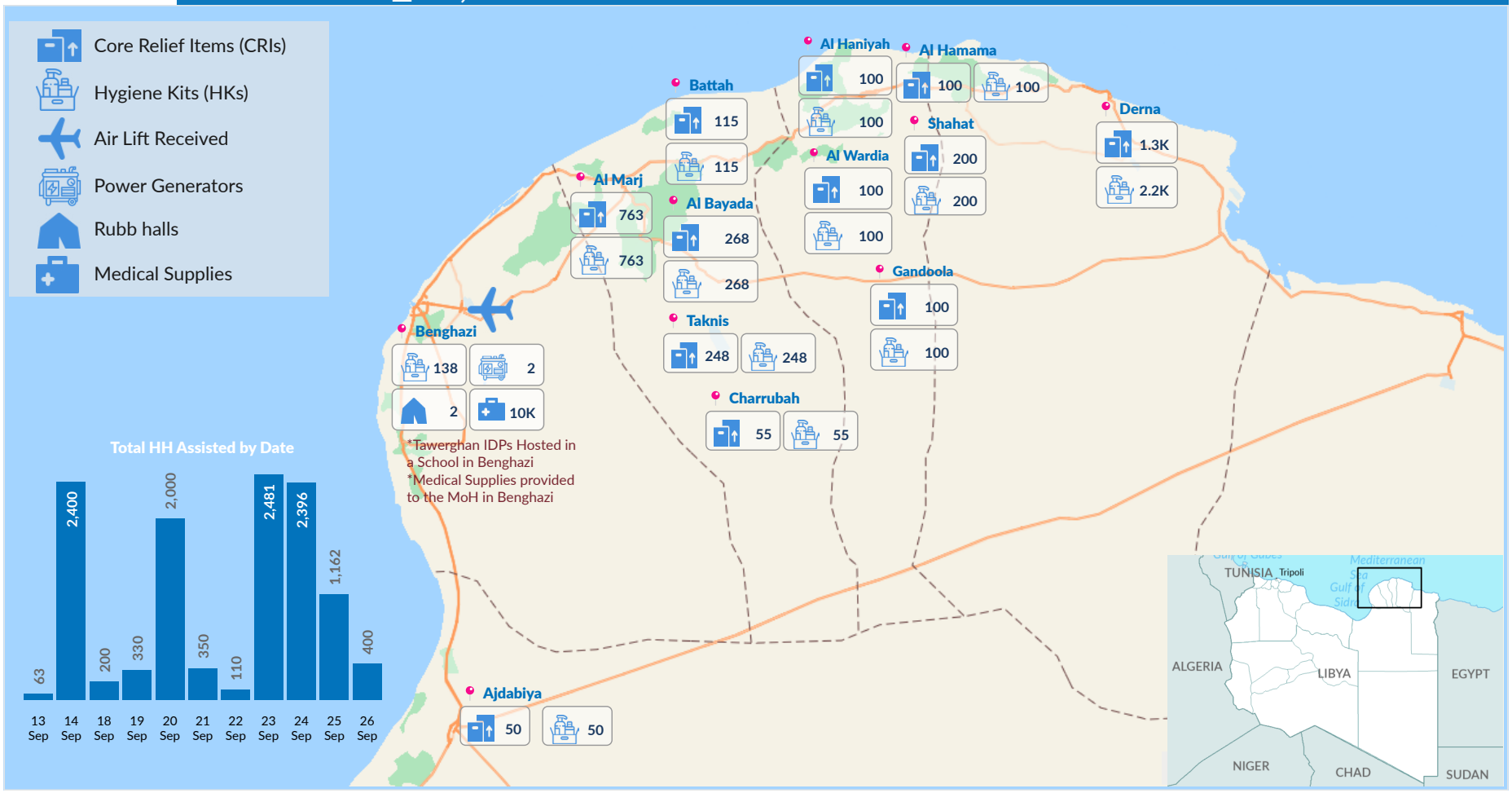
UNHCR's Assistant Chief of Mission in Libya shares her story of visiting survivors in Derna in the wake of the deadly floods.

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

Libya

11,892 Total HH Assisted
51,460 Total Individuals Assisted

UNHCR Emergency Response for East Libya: Storm Daniel
Date: 28 September 2023



Core Relief Items: Blankets, Mattresses, Plastic Sheets, kitchen Sets, Adult diapers, Winter gloves, Rain Coats, Winter Socks, Diapers, Baby Kits, Solar Lamps, Jerry Cans, Winter Boots, Jackets, Rubber slippers, Tracksuits, Heaters, Sleeping Mats.
Note: Households receiving multiple forms of assistance may be counted more than once

Source of Data: UNHCR in Partnership with **Libaid**
All figures represent number of households.
Estimated average household size is 5

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